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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/279, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/321, A/48/338, A/48/353, A/48/359, A/48/445-S/26501, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/485; A/C.2/48/4; E/1993/35)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 154: UNITED NATIONS INTERIM OFFICES (continued) (A/48/146 and Add.1, A/48/585)

1. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that operational activities for development were facing an array of challenges having to do on the one hand with financing, made precarious by a difficult world economic situation and, on the other hand, with pressure from a growing number of recipient countries for expansion and diversification of the activities. On the subject of financing, operational activities, the programmes of multilateral financial institutions like the World Bank, and bilateral assistance, which were meant to fulfil complementary roles, were competing for allocation of the necessarily limited resources. Since, however, donors would choose the most effective channel likely to have the most impact, the United Nations must ensure that its operational activities were not marginalized by the programmes of multilateral financial institutions. That said, General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199 had already notably enhanced the effectiveness of development activities.

2. It was at the field level that the United Nations was best able to respond to specific development needs, and it was at that level that the impact of its operational activities could be measured. It was therefore appropriate that resolution 47/199 had called for putting in place a coherent system to help recipient Governments pursue their development objectives. The concept of a country strategy note articulated in that resolution could serve as a basis for the integration and coordination of the activities of the recipient country and of the United Nations system at the field level and also for national project execution. Recipient countries should therefore be urged to formulate country strategy notes; for its part, the United Nations system should continue to work towards decentralization and delegation of authority, harmonization of programming cycles and simplification of procedures. It was also essential to strengthen coordination mechanisms in order to encourage resident coordinators and other field representatives of United Nations agencies to work together. In the light of the practical difficulties involved in implementing the changes needed in the resident coordinator system, it was important to widen the pool of qualified development professionals eligible for appointment and to increase the transparency of the selection process.

(Mr. Horiguchi, Japan)

3. With regard to the integration of the Office for Project Services within the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had in decision 93/42 accepted the modalities for the transfer of the Office as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1993/70), subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 5 of the decision. The Governing Council had further insisted that the modalities for the transfer should be clarified further and all other related problems should be resolved before the transfer took place. At that time, his delegation had expressed its belief that for the transfer to be successful, the Office must continue to operate at maximum efficiency, remain fully accountable and continue under the control of the UNDP Governing Council. The proposed merger, however, did not appear likely to guarantee the success of the transfer. Since UNDP and the Department in question had not yet resolved a number of key issues, including procurement and reimbursement arrangements, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), unable to satisfy itself that adequate financial and management controls were in place, had recommended that the integration should be postponed by one year, until January 1995. Under the current circumstances, his Government also was not fully satisfied with the proposal. Since the Office for Project Services had played an integral role in the implementation of UNDP country and regional programmes at the field level, his Government supported the ACABQ recommendation. It was of paramount importance to ensure the maximum effectiveness of international development activities.

4. Mr. NGUYEN MINH THONG (Viet Nam) observed that many developing countries were facing economic and social development problems which had increasingly come to affect political and social stability and even national security, and that his Government understood the immense difficulties the countries of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries were experiencing. In that context, careful consideration should be given to the structure, functions and mode of operation of the United Nations offices in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, drawing on the experience gained by the world-wide network of United Nations field offices currently operating in more than 150 developing countries. As many other delegations had said, it would be unrealistic and highly controversial to create a new model of United Nations field offices for operational activities that would give them political or other functions apart from development assistance objectives. General Assembly resolution 47/199 provided an adequate framework for establishing a resident coordinator structure in the field.

5. The restructuring of operational activities had reached a critical juncture. Eleven months after the adoption by consensus of resolution 47/199, much progress was apparent, but it was urgent to give effect to all the commitments and appeals in the resolution. It was a matter of deep concern in that regard that the political will of the international community had not been translated into action, and that the resources allocated to operational activities had diminished, causing several agencies to cut back their programmes. Furthermore, the results of the recent Pledging Conference had fallen far short of meeting the needs. On the one hand, the restructuring of operational activities must rest upon a foundation of adequate resources, and,

(Mr. Nguyen Minh Thong, Viet Nam)

on the other, upon the fundamental principles of universality, multilateralism, neutrality, non-conditionality and flexibility. Operational activities for development had gradually gained in effectiveness, thanks to various measures: the promotion of national capacity-building, national project execution, simplification of procedures, harmonization of programming cycles, decentralization and delegation of authority.

6. It was of course important to strengthen the coordination of the operational activities of various agencies in the field in order to reduce overlapping and improve the system's overall assistance capacity, but that must not work to the detriment of the comparative advantages of different agencies. It was primarily the responsibility of Governments, in the light of their national strategies and priorities, to coordinate all the external assistance which they received, including assistance channelled through the United Nations. Resolution 47/199 defined the notion of a country strategy note and set out the principles governing it. Only the socio-economic development plans and strategies prepared by the recipient countries could provide a coherent and integrated framework for international assistance and a solid basis for a common strategy of United Nations agencies in their operational activities. However, the United Nations system should assist the recipient country to formulate the country strategy note at its request and in close consultation with its authorities.

7. The Government and people of Viet Nam attached great importance to their cooperation relations with United Nations agencies. In the specific situation of Viet Nam in recent decades the international community had furnished valuable assistance through multilateral organizations, including emergency as well as development aid. That assistance fitted in well with the country's economic and social development plans and particularly so at a time when it was implementing its sustainable development strategy to the year 2000, which meant that it must mobilize all its available resources and put them to the best use.

8. Miss KULAWAT (Thailand) said that the time had come to forge the various complementary mandates of all United Nations agencies into an integrated, effective and coordinated support system which enabled countries to achieve their goals of sustainable human development. Two initiatives were fundamental in that regard: an agenda for development, and the revitalization of international cooperation, which implied a unified approach by the United Nations, particularly at the field level. The United Nations presence at the country level must be comprehensively strengthened through the role of UNDP. That would require careful examination of the concept of United Nations interim offices, for every country had its own diversified and specific needs.

9. The Thai delegation concurred in principle with the view of the Chairman of the Group of 77 concerning the application of resolution 47/199. It stressed the importance of the role of the UNDP representative as resident coordinator, and UNDP ought to be the local unifying force in national activities. The progress made by UNDP in implementing resolution 47/199 with regard to the country strategy note, the selection of the resident coordinator, and the specification of his responsibilities was encouraging. Thailand also welcomed the clarification given in document A/48/585 about the political functions which

(Miss Kulawat, Thailand)

might be assigned to the interim offices, i.e., that all the activities of the offices must take place as a result of clear legislative mandates and in agreement with the countries concerned. In some cases representatives of agencies other than UNDP should act as resident coordinators.

10. The serious situation in certain countries required strong United Nations leadership in both the political and the development fields, in particular in nation-building and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of certain new countries and war-torn countries, but the concept of a United Nations representative could not apply in all cases or constitute a standard model. It was for each country to determine its own developmental needs and the form of the United Nations presence. The issues of the title of the United Nations leader at the country level, his legislative mandates, and the establishment of interim offices must be the subject of consultations and agreements with countries on a case-by-case basis. It would be premature at the present session to elaborate "new" overall modalities for the developmental and humanitarian activities of the United Nations in all countries. It was interesting that the Under-Secretary-General had stated in his comments on the concerns expressed by States that the interim offices were a response to those concerns in the specific context of the needs and preferences of new recipient countries and in conformity with the existing legislative mandates. It was to be hoped that the concept of interim offices would continue to be implemented in that spirit in strengthening United Nations leadership at the country level.

11. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that the Brazilian delegation fully subscribed to the views stated by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. The operational activities of the United Nations were passing through a critical period owing to the decline in the resources allocated to them, even though the General Assembly had tried to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations system by adopting resolution 47/199 which contained a number of important guidelines. It was to be hoped that the spirit of conciliation which had characterized the negotiation and adoption of resolution 47/199 would also prevail during the consideration of draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1.

12. With regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children, the Brazilian delegation welcomed the substantial progress described in the Secretary-General's report (A/48/321), particularly with regard to national programmes of action.

13. Brazil was currently drafting its national programme of action, taking a decentralized approach in accordance with the country's Constitution and its Statute of the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent: the programmes and projects were launched at the state and municipality levels, with the Federal Government responsible for overall coordination. The Constitution also envisaged participation by the people in policy formulation through representative organizations.

14. It was within that decentralized framework that Brazil had established a "Pact for Children" which had held its third meeting on 20 May 1992.

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

Twenty-four state governors had undertaken to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children in their respective states.

15. The national programme of action was a dynamic process in Brazil; the content of the programme would be kept under constant review by all the partners and could be modified as new situations arose.

16. However, the country's effort to solve the problems of children in Brazil was encountering many difficulties, for the most vulnerable groups in society were suffering the consequences of a long period of economic readjustment. It was thus more important than ever to allocate greater resources to operational activities and to international cooperation.

17. Mr. KOZUSNIK (Austria) said that following the recent upheavals on the world scene the international community was facing enormous challenges which could be tackled only through development. In addition to issues of economic policy and resources, development brought into play political, social, environmental and educational factors and within a context of global peace and universal human participation.

18. The United Nations was the most appropriate forum for examining that new concept of global, integrated and environmentally sustainable development.

19. Given the scarcity of resources, it was more important than ever to focus more sharply on the rationalization of operational activities.

20. The efforts to reform the United Nations system had yielded encouraging first results: enhanced coordination of external assistance by the recipient countries; promotion of national strategies and priorities; and coordination of the activities of the United Nations system. Those were important results of resolution 47/199 and of two mechanisms which it had created: the national strategy note and the programme approach. Support for electoral processes was one of the assistance activities which merited particular encouragement.

21. However, the overall picture was rather worrying. The funds for long-term preventive action continued to decline at a time when enormous sums were needed to cope with emergency situations which were in fact consequences of development deficits and failures. It was therefore preferable and less costly, as the UNDP Administrator had noted, to strengthen preventive action and attack the evil at its root.

22. The results of the recent pledging conference were a matter of concern. Austria, like other donors, was facing many challenges. It would nevertheless maintain its voluntary contributions to United Nations funds and programmes at the 1992 level and in some cases might even increase them. Coordination in the field of operational activities and monitoring and evaluation measures were therefore of critical importance for effective use of the scanty resources available.

23. Austria was deeply committed to the success of the current round of negotiations on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in

(Mr. Kozusnik, Austria)

the economic, social and related fields. It was to be hoped that draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1, which dealt in particular with the functioning of the executive boards of the operational agencies, would be adopted, for it would contribute significantly to increasing the efficiency of the United Nations operational activities system and therefore make the system more attractive to donors.

24. Mrs. GRIGORESCU (Romania) expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/48/321) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children. The Summit was important because it represented the first global consensus on principles and strategies.

25. In Romania, one of the first steps in the follow-up of the Summit had been to introduce into the new Constitution of Romania a series of provisions on the protection of children and young people, in conformity with the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. One of those articles was dedicated to the protection of disabled persons, including children. Other constitutional provisions, laws and decrees were aimed at protecting the family and defending the interests of children in all categories and classes.

26. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, in countries like Romania any planning was made quite difficult by "... rapid social and economic transition and, in some cases, civil strife". National programmes of action were all the more important because strategies and programmes for the survival, protection and development of children were as necessary in those countries as they were elsewhere, if not more so.

27. Romania was one of the five Eastern European countries that had already begun the process of preparing national programmes of action. In so doing, it had increased State allocations for children.

28. Education was organized mainly by the State and open to all. Until December 1989, the official texts guaranteeing protection for certain categories of children (orphans and abandoned or disabled children) had remained a dead letter, but the network of rehabilitation centres, which included both hospitals for severely disabled children and specialized institutions for children "at risk", now provided all levels of schooling. Those institutions were being provided with qualified staff and social workers, but there were still deficiencies to be corrected. Programmes of work and re-education were also provided for delinquent children.

29. Street children were one of the results of the transition process. Governmental and non-governmental bodies had initiated several projects, some of them supported by the UNICEF Office in Bucharest.

30. Children's health had recently begun to receive special attention. Several measures had been taken: free medical assistance through the age of 16; preventive and infant care up to one year of age; free food for infants whose mothers could not breast-feed them; paid leave for mothers whose children were ill; and free medical assistance in nursery schools and schools.

(Mrs. Grigorescu, Romania)

31. Despite the lack of basic drugs, doctors and medical staff and other serious handicaps, the infant mortality rate had decreased in 1991 to 22.7 per 1,000 live births, and efforts were being made to decrease it further.

32. The most important aspect of the Summit follow-up was that adults had recognized the value and dignity of children. Romania fully supported the principles covering the survival, protection and development of children reiterated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in June 1993. Of all the factors of development, none was as widely accepted by the international community as the cause of children, and none had the same power to mobilize.

33. Mr. SNEGUR (Republic of Moldova) said that like all the newly independent States the Republic of Moldova was engaged in a complex and difficult process of transition to democracy which was made even more difficult by the lack of financial, human and technical resources. The success of the transition process would depend largely on a positive external environment and a firm commitment from the international community, including the United Nations system, to support the reform efforts and ensure the full integration of the economies of the countries in transition into the world economy. In that regard, the consensus reflected in General Assembly resolution 47/187 was very encouraging.

34. He commended UNDP for expanding its operational activities in the newly independent States, in conformity with Governing Council decision 92/43, and for its close coordination with other United Nations bodies and other donors. UNDP had rightly selected five areas of concentration which were essential for the countries in transition: national capacity-building in management development and democratization, private sector development, human development and protection of the environment.

35. His delegation also appreciated the regional programmes, intended to complement the efforts of the countries in the region, especially in areas such as privatization and private sector development, environmental management and protection of the Black Sea and the environmental management programme in the Danube River basin.

36. The Republic of Moldova had high hopes for the opening of the United Nations integrated office in Chisinau, which would enable it to solve many of its problems, not all of which were economic. Since those problems were multifaceted, the country programme should be well structured and comprehensive, and a United Nations integrated office appeared to be the most appropriate solution.

37. Mr. TOURE (Mali) endorsed the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and thanked the representatives of the various United Nations bodies for their preliminary statements.

38. United Nations operational activities for development were extremely important to the African countries, whose basic concern remained the revitalization of economic growth and development, as the General Assembly had stated in the Declaration on the same subject at its eighteenth special session.

(Mr. Toure, Mali)

The drop in official development assistance was jeopardizing the implementation of policies and programmes put forward as part of a genuine partnership. That downward trend was reflected in the decrease of UNDP resources in 1993 compared with their 1992 level and by the results of the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

39. In view of the commitment of the Government of Mali to operational activities and given their impact on the country's economy, the Government had decided to double its contribution for 1994. It also called on the main donors to increase the resources allocated to operational activities and to reaffirm the importance of General Assembly resolution 47/199, whose full implementation would give new life to United Nations activities in the area of economic and social development.

40. The report of the Secretary-General (A/48/321) was valuable and the measures taken by UNICEF to follow up the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children were to be commended. Regional and national programmes of action provided an appropriate framework for putting the recommendations of the World Summit into effect. Efforts should also aim at putting into effect the Consensus of Dakar, adopted in 1992 at the International Conference for Assistance to African Children.

41. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said he agreed with the Administrator of UNDP that, in order to respond to the new challenges confronting it, the international community must seek a revitalized framework for international cooperation and base development on a new consensus that would convince the developed countries that global growth and socio-economic development were essential for peace and security.

42. The United Nations development bodies, which provided neutral and non-political assistance free of charge, had a unique role to play in providing the developing countries, at their request, with high quality expertise to assist them in the management of their development process. It was therefore a matter of grave concern that financial contributions to United Nations development activities were declining and becoming increasingly unpredictable, forcing cuts in development activities. In addition, the trend among donors to pledge special purpose funds at the expense of resources for core activities was compelling the United Nations development agencies to alter their portfolios in order to take account of the new priorities identified by the donors.

43. The recipient countries themselves should identify their priorities, formulate their development plans and choose the type of assistance that suited them. It was not for the governing bodies of United Nations funds to determine which global themes should be adopted by recipient countries.

44. Most developing countries, at grips with immediate fiscal and monetary problems, applied structural adjustment programmes, which eroded their social and human development programmes and thus adversely affected the most vulnerable segments of their populations. The United Nations development system had a

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

special role to play in promoting balanced socio-economic development, which Mr. Speth, the Administrator of UNDP, had referred to as "people-centred sustainable development".

45. Economic growth must be accompanied by social development as a catalyst for progress, and Pakistan had launched an ambitious 10-year plan of action.

46. UNDP, being politically neutral, was well placed to offer advice to developing countries on their development strategies and programmes, help them to ensure coherent utilization of all the assistance provided to them and integrate it into their priority sectors. It could also provide assistance to sectors, different from country to country, that were not covered by other organizations. Thus, limiting the role of UNDP to a few globally agreed priorities would be detrimental.

47. In view of the reduction in traditional donor contributions, UNDP must consider new modalities for fund-raising: endowment funds, partnerships with the private sector, revolving funds for specific activities and private investments.

48. Resolution 47/199 showed clearly that the country strategy note was an instrument of coordination for the recipient Government, which not only prepared it but was, in a way, its owner. Documents prepared by United Nations organizations could not under any circumstances be a substitute for directives given by the Governments themselves for the management of their own economies.

49. The programme approach was critical to success in the development process. It was important not to have almost every donor finance projects in a particular sector that happened to become fashionable without there being any strategy for that sector, since that resulted in an enormous waste of resources.

50. With the help of some non-governmental organizations and UNDP, Pakistan had elaborated a sustainable development strategy that had been accepted as a framework for assistance to Pakistan by bilateral donors, United Nations organizations and the World Bank.

51. Coordination at all levels was crucial and Pakistan agreed with the central thrust of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/146/Add.1), namely the need for a more unified and better coordinated presence of the Organization in all United Nations programme countries. Nevertheless, the special political tasks of the United Nations should continue to be performed by the existing mechanisms, such as the special representatives of the Secretary-General, but must not be integrated with development activities, which were, by their very nature, neutral. The objective of an integrated, cost-effective approach to cooperation for development could be achieved through strengthening the role and the functions of resident coordinators along the lines of paragraph 39 of General Assembly resolution 47/199.

52. Mr. EL-HASSAN (Sudan) said that the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had shown that national capacity-building was an essential element of the strategies of the United Nations system. All attempts made to assess the impact of cooperation in that area, however, had failed, as was amply shown by the continued need for technical cooperation. The creation and strengthening of capacities ought first of all to enable developing countries better to assume responsibility for managing their development and to define their priorities and the coordination of external contributions. After 40 years of assistance, however, the results did not match the expenditure of resources, especially in Africa and the least developed countries. The efficacy of certain assistance-granting mechanisms must therefore be reviewed and it would be useful, in that connection, for the legislative bodies to make the concept of capacity-strengthening a criterion of effectiveness.

53. Concerning agenda item 154, the representative of Colombia had spoken on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that belonged to the Group of 77 and the Secretary-General had clarified certain points about which there had been misgivings. The reform of the system had to be done with caution, for it was difficult to achieve coordination by way of decrees; moreover, the number of resolutions adopted, to no avail, by the General Assembly over the previous 15 years on the subject of coordination and the role of resident coordinators bore witness to the magnitude of the task. Results depended on the active participation of Member States at two levels: in the field, coordination could be ensured only if the recipients themselves assumed responsibility for it and were given the necessary means; at the world level, the intention expressed by the Secretary-General to continue to improve the integration and coordination of cooperation for development must be accompanied by the political will of the Member States consistently to speak the same language in the various governing bodies of the agencies and in the Economic and Social Council.

54. As the Administrator of UNDP had said, the Organization currently had a tendency to accord priority to peace-keeping operations and emergency humanitarian aid, to the detriment of longer-range development. But emergency measures were not enough, and most countries also needed sustained longer-term assistance to rebuild and revitalize their economies. For that reason, the continuous decline in resources earmarked for operational activities was alarming: it was in fact always more logical and more cost-effective to invest in development.

55. In that connection, his delegation reaffirmed its support for UNDP and its new Administrator and hoped that UNDP would maintain both its central role in the United Nations development system and its neutrality and universality. His delegation also felt that the current trend towards conditional aid must be reversed in the near future, for only the priorities of the recipient country itself should count.

56. Mr. MURIITHI (Kenya) said the introductory remarks made by the Administrator of UNDP, the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) were particularly welcome since they came one year after the adoption of resolution 47/199, whereby the General Assembly had given impetus to the debate on major issues relating to operational activities of the United Nations development system and requested the Secretary-General to present a detailed report on the implementation of that resolution.

57. The importance of UNDP in developing countries could not be over-emphasized, for it acted as a catalyst for other forms of assistance. The financial and technical assistance it provided through capacity-building, human resources development and coordination of emergency relief was particularly useful to developing countries. Capacity 21, for instance, was aimed at increasing their ability to absorb the resources and technology earmarked for the implementation of Agenda 21. The Administrator of UNDP had emphasized the shortage of resources facing UNDP at a time when the demands on it were ever increasing, both in the areas of poverty alleviation, human resources development and institution-building and in its coordinative role. UNDP should also be strengthened so as to be able to provide management capacity-building in developing countries, ensure that development programmes benefited the intended recipients, develop human resources and promote regional cooperation and integration.

58. UNICEF had vast economic and social development programmes in the developing countries. It was trying to improve the quality of life of children, and appropriate financial and human resources should be allocated to UNICEF to enable it to implement children's programmes in developing countries. UNICEF should devote particular attention to the needs of street children - education, health-care, food and integration into society - in the fast-growing cities of developing countries.

59. Women constituted the majority of the poor people in both the rural and the urban areas in the developing countries; at the same time, they were also the backbone of economic activities especially in food production and the welfare of families. Yet, in most developing countries, fewer women had access to tertiary education. That was why the Kenyan Government was trying to improve the general level of literacy and the status of women in the family and society. It had therefore established a task force to make recommendations regarding amendments to those aspects of existing laws that inhibited the participation of women in development. Kenya had also spared no effort in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 and looked forward to the success of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995, which would build on the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

60. The efficiency of the United Nations operational activities could only be achieved through a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to the needs of recipient countries under the leadership of the resident coordinator, bearing in mind the complementarity of the system and the need for a division of labour.

61. Mr. LWIN (Myanmar) said that his delegation fully shared the views expressed by the Chairman of the Group of 77 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In the previous year, the Second Committee had held a constructive debate on operational activities for development which had resulted in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199, aimed at enhancing the functioning of the United Nations development system. The country strategy notes the mechanisms for selecting the United Nations resident coordinator and the field-level committees were important elements in that regard. In the year since the adoption of that resolution, not all its provisions had yet been implemented. It was important to implement all the elements contained in the resolution without departing from the original mandate.

62. It was encouraging to note that the UNDP Administrator had stressed that the great goals of the United Nations - human rights, democratization, environmental protection, peace - could be achieved only in the context of development and that the Agenda for Peace required the Agenda for Development.

63. Myanmar had consistently cooperated with the United Nations programmes and agencies in their operational activities for development, to which it attached great importance. His country had consistently supported such activities in accordance with its financial capacities and would continue to do so. Although the resources made available under the fifth programming cycle for funding technical cooperation activities in Myanmar were limited, projects for the most disadvantaged segments of the population would be implemented during the transitional period beginning in July 1993.

64. It was timely to recall that, as a lead agency for technical cooperation, UNDP had remained apolitical and had provided systematic and sustained assistance to developing countries; it was extremely important to preserve the agency's apolitical nature. Operational activities for development must be devoid of any political considerations, which would cast doubts on their impartiality and affect the systematic and sustained assistance they provided. That was why Myanmar was disappointed with some of the points contained in the Secretary-General's report on United Nations interim offices (A/48/146/Add.1) and therefore welcomed the clarification made by the Under-Secretary-General on behalf of the Secretary-General. On the other hand, his delegation unreservedly supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, particularly on the need for political activities to be kept separate from the structure created for the purpose of operational activities for development.

65. Mrs. POLLACK (United States of America) said that the UNDP Administrator had noted in the context of resolution 47/199 that the discussion should not be confined to quantity. In that connection, at the latest substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, her delegation had stressed the importance which it attached to the formulation of country strategy notes as an effective vehicle for the delivery of coherent and effective development assistance. What interested her delegation, in addition to the number of countries that had expressed their interest in using that tool, was the real potential of the note - as the UNICEF Executive Director had said - for providing inter-agency collaboration that would strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations development system. The United Nations must continue to work on the quality of those notes and, more importantly, the quality of the assistance that

(Mrs. Pollack, United States)

would come from them. Likewise, according to resolution 47/199, the qualities which resident coordinators needed to possess were more crucial than the number of resident coordinators who came from other United Nations agencies.

66. Progress in implementing some of the elements of the resolution had been greater than others. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that those elements must be seen as parts of a greater whole and the overall goal of the resolution must not be jeopardized by focusing attention on only some of them. Similarly, all the principles in the resolution must guide the efforts of the United Nations development system.

67. Resolution 47/199 and the larger triennial review must also guide the Committee in its efforts to strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations development system. The international community must not allow particular interests or temporary problems to deflect it from the direction it had set for itself. While the process had flaws, it provided a common game plan which would lead to a more coordinated and more coherent system of delivering United Nations development assistance in the light of future needs.

68. Mr. AWAAD (Egypt) said he shared the views expressed by the Chairman of the Group of 77 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

69. The financial resources allocated to operational activities for development must be increased in order to enable the United Nations system to play its proper role. Appropriate attention must be devoted to that issue during the discussions on the revitalization of the economic and social sectors of the Organization. Moreover, as current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Egypt would like to stress that priority should be given to Africa, which had special problems, and that assistance to Africa would have to be intensified in the 1990s.

70. His delegation welcomed the Under-Secretary-General's clarifications with respect to the United Nations interim offices; he had answered some, if not all, the concerns expressed. While the establishment of interim offices in the newly independent States had been timely, such offices must not exceed their mandate and must not undertake operational activities. The General Assembly should reaffirm its commitment to resolutions 47/199 and 46/182.

71. The results and recommendations of the World Summit for Children must be reviewed and its conclusions must be included in other international documents concerning women and children.

72. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on agenda items 94 and 154 was concluded.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.